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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 5 June 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

(a) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1990 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1991/28 (Parts I, II and III) and DP/1991/30-35)

1. Mr. VAN ARENDONK (Deputy Executive Director (Programme), United Nations Population Fund), commenting on the proposed successor arrangements for agency support costs (DP/1991/35), said that the Inter-Agency Task Force would monitor implementation of the successor arrangements and had already begun work on defining the functions of the country programme technical support teams. It was hoped to recruit team members from regional institutions since they would have relevant experience. The aim was to set up flexible teams, so that staff would be appointed under the 200 series rules to facilitate changes in team composition. The teams would close the gap between what was available with a country and internationally, and would help to develop self-reliance. The roles of team leaders and country directors did not overlap, one being responsible for management of the team's activities and the other for a specific country.

2. The proposals would not, in essence affect United Nations organs and agencies, so that, for example, the role of the regional economic commissions in providing technical back-stopping would remain unchanged. Equally, training and other regional institutions would not be affected. One difference, however, would be the availability of more regional advisers at headquarters and in the field. The objections to the successor arrangements raised by the United Nations were the result of a misunderstanding of the proposals, and he hoped that discussions would continue with a view to reaching a consensus on the matter.

3. With regard to the financial implications, a total of $89.4 million for technical support services would be required for the period 1992-1995. The cost of recruiting advisers would not be charged to project budgets under the successor arrangements, only the travel and subsistence allowance of team members, where appropriate. Reimbursement of indirect administrative costs had been set at 6 per cent, but that level was currently under review.

4. The proposals were based on identified needs, and it was important to proceed with their implementation so that the Fund could assess whether it had succeeded in devising a better way of dealing with what was a complex situation. The Fund would endeavour to implement the arrangements in a flexible manner as circumstances demanded.

5. Mr. SINGH (Technical and Evaluation Division, United Nations Population Fund), responding to comments on the report of the Executive Director on contraceptive requirements and demand for contraceptive commodities in developing countries in the 1990s (DP/1991/34), said that UNFPA had noted the willingness of the United States to participate in future country-specific studies. The studies would provide general guidelines and would also be further refined so as to focus on specific problems. Such studies were conducted at the request of the countries concerned, not on the initiative of the headquarters staff of the Fund, with a view to determining how needs could be met from a country's own resources and international assistance.

6. The task of the UNFPA Procurement Unit was to procure commodities at the request of recipient countries through the use of competitive bidding. The Unit would assist countries and agencies in the acquisition of contraceptive commodities, if requested. There were no plans to expand the size of the Unit.

7. UNFPA was helping developing countries to establish and expand local production of contraceptive commodities and would continue to do so. The Fund would maintain its cooperation with the World Bank with regard to funding. The consultative group, initially set up to oversee preparation of the study on contraceptive commodities, was open to all countries and agencies involved, with the aim of exchanging information and pooling resources. The Governing Council would be kept fully informed of all developments relating to contraceptive commodity programmes.

8. Mr. KITATANI (Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration, United Nations Population Fund)), commenting on the status of financial implementation of Governing Council-approved UNFPA country programmes and projects and on the work plan for 1992-1995 (DP/1991/30 and 31) said that the projected 10 per cent increase in resources had been supported by some delegations, while others had thought it too optimistic. The Fund had been guided by the goals set in the Amsterdam Declaration, in accordance with which $1.1 billion would be required by the year 2000, a target endorsed by the Development Assistance Committee. The figure had been derived by extrapolating on the basis of UNFPA's experience. The Fund's delivery capacity was expanding and, given the many projects which needed assistance, it should increase its target figures.

9. The work plan was based on a financial planning perspective, but in future would incorporate policy orientations. It would, in practice, be difficult to incorporate multibilateral programming, given that it was subject to negotiations involving a number of donors.

10. With regard to expenditure on country programmes exceeding levels approved by the Governing Council, in 1990 the Fund had delivered $168.9 million in project expenditures, including an advance of $400,000 against 1991 programmable resources. The Fund conducted its work on the basis of estimated resources and expenditures, with adjustments after the fact. Such adjustments were reflected in the subsequent work plan. The capacity to

(Mr. Kitatani)

monitor programme expenditures was being developed through refinement of the information management system. A flexible approach was obviously required in ensuring delivery.

11. The assistance provided for family planning had fallen slightly between 1988 and 1989, but had increased in 1990. It should be noted that assistance in the fields of information, education and communication was closely linked to family planning issues. The Fund was aware of the importance of maternal and child health and family planning.

12. With regard to the categories within the work plan, there might be some overlapping in that some projects, for example, those relating to family planning and women, could move from one category to another as they were implemented. Some thought had been given to assessing the percentage of specific projects falling within different categories.

13. With respect to the distribution of programmable resources among country and intercountry activities and services, indicated in table G in document DP/1991/30, the technical support services component, which was directly related to country activities, was 9 per cent, so that the overall figure for country activities was higher than the 67.9 per cent stated in the table. With regard to table H, while there had been a small decline, of less than 1 per cent, in the figure for Asia and the Pacific, the amount had increased in absolute terms. The adjustment had been necessary to make resources available for Africa. The Fund applied the criteria for transparency established by the Governing Council.

14. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that the present system of arrangements for agency support costs was inadequate and needed to be changed. Member States held the Fund accountable for resources managed on their behalf and also for the success or failure of projects and programmes. The Fund was making a proposal to help it deliver a better system and it hoped for their support in that regard.

15. UNFPA was making headway in all regions in promoting the concept of integrated national maternal and child health/family planning plans, thanks to the new programme review and strategy development process. Under her personal initiative, the Fund had renewed efforts for coordination with the World Bank, all the regional development banks and other financial institutions.

16. Regarding the UNFPA strategy for sub-Saharan Africa, the Fund would be carrying out policy-oriented studies on migration trends in the West African subregion in cooperation with the Union for African Population Studies. In view of the importance of structural adjustment programmes in Africa, UNFPA would be assigning a demographer/economist to the World Bank to ensure that population was taken into account in social dimension of adjustment (SDA) programmes and in the policy packages of structural adjustment programmes. The project would start in 1991 and would continue in the next cycle of the intercountry programme for sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, UNFPA would be

(Dr. Sadik)

supporting the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the establishment of a population commission, through which the Fund would be able to put population on the agenda of the meeting of Heads of State and Government of OAU member States.

17. There was considerable cooperation at the field level between UNIFEM and UNFPA in the area of women, population and development, as for instance in a project to strengthen national machinery for women in Botswana, an income-generating and population education project for women in Mali and the strengthening of the gender factor of data collection activities in India. The Fund had also cooperated in the production of a monograph entitled The World's Women 1970-1990, which would serve as an authoritative statistical account of the evolution of women's role during the past 20 years. Periodically, the Fund issued an update on its activities regarding HIV/AIDS, which highlighted action taken with respect to women and HIV/AIDS. Regarding the percentage of women employed by the Fund, UNFPA had set itself the immediate goal of ensuring that 50 per cent of its professional staff were women.

18. UNFPA was deeply gratified that the United States Government had decided to commit $500,000 towards the cost of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. Regarding the Fund's activities in relation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), there were three clusters of activities: a UNFPA staff member had been seconded to the UNCED secretariat, the Fund had convened an expert meeting on population and environment in March 1991, and it had prepared two major publications on the relationship between population and the environment. Secondly, UNFPA field offices had been asked to work closely with Governments on national preparations for UNCED, with a view to giving population factors and trends due importance in national substantive preparations for UNCED. Thirdly, at the country level, UNFPA continued to support national research and studies and information, education and communication activities.

19. Under its intercountry programme for 1992-1995, UNFPA intended to promote further studies on various specific aspects of South-South and South-North migration. The Fund, together with WHO, would assess condom requirements in relation to HIV/AIDS. It would also increase its efforts to promote technical cooperation among developing countries. With regard to priority countries, the Fund wished to reach its 80 per cent target for the allocation of resources to those countries as quickly as possible.

20. The Fund had earlier that year chosen two recipients for the 1991 United Nations Population Award: Julia Henderson, a pioneer and leader of the international population movement for four decades, and the Centro de Estudios de Población y Paternidad Responsable (CEPAR), an Ecuadorian non-governmental organization that had made positive contributions in the implementation of a population policy and strategy.

(Dr. Sadik)

21. The Fund agreed with many delegations about the need to carefully adapt policies and programmes to the socio-cultural context, to give the utmost care to human rights issues, to ensure that communities and individuals participated actively in programme design and implementation and to direct population and family planning activities at men, adolescents and other new or hard-to-reach target groups. As to monitoring and evaluation, by 1992 the Fund might have data for assessing the impact of its programmes in 103 countries.

22. UNFPA was grateful to many of its major donors, including Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, for their special efforts to increase their 1991 contribution. The Government of Romania had also increased its contribution substantially. She appealed once again to the United States Government to join the world consensus and resume its support for UNFPA.

UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES (DP/1991/41 and Add.1-3, DP/1991/42)

23. Mr. JI Chaozhu (Under-Secretary-General, Department of Technical Cooperation for Development) said that the decisions taken at the current session of the Governing Council might determine the very future of United Nations multilateral technical cooperation. The world was at a critical juncture in history. With the end of the cold war, the United Nations was beginning to function politically in the manner envisaged by the Charter. Its role had never been more important in promoting international cooperation. At a time when it had been able to achieve tangible progress on a number of political issues, it was clear that real political stability must be based on economic opportunity and social progress.

24. One of the main goals of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade was a decisive strengthening of international development cooperation. The United Nations system was firmly committed to achieving that goal. In adopting General Assembly resolution 44/211 on the comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, Member States had committed themselves to strengthening national execution. The Governing Council, in its decision 90/26 on agency support costs, had begun the difficult task of implementing the new approach. The Council was on the brink of historic decisions that would affect the very future of United Nations multilateral technical cooperation into the next century. Never before had the gap between the needs of developing countries and the resources available to meet them been greater.

25. The Department of Technical Cooperation for Development (DTCD) was the main technical cooperation arm of the United Nations and had close to 100 technical experts operating in 12 sectors, including mineral resources, energy, remote sensing, economic policy and planning, population and integrated rural development. In 1990, the Department had implemented

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

projects costing $181 million in developing countries around the world. On an annual basis, the Department procured through international competitive bidding over $40 million of equipment and $20 million in specialized services. The Department contracted with major companies world wide and the leading institutions which had the state-of-the-art expertise that developing countries required. DTCD provided short-term technical advisory services at no cost to developing countries and organized training workshops for experts from developing countries on important sectoral issues.

26. One of the main areas of emphasis in the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations technical cooperation activities (DP/1991/41 and Add.1-3) was the Department's responsiveness to a number of international priority issues. Governing Council decision 90/34 outlined six UNDP priority areas for the fifth programming cycle. DTCD was significantly involved in all those areas. Those priorities were dealt with thematically in document DP/1991/41 and sectorally in document DP/1991/41/Add.1.

27. Another area emphasized in the report was responsiveness to the encouragement and requests arising from Governing Council decision 90/37, which indicated several ways to increase cooperation between UNDP and DTCD. UNFPA was urged to continue to make full use of the Department's capacity for programme formulation, sectoral analysis and technical backstopping in population activities.

28. Several recent resolutions and decisions and a number of recent studies had focused renewed attention on the tripartite relationship between Governments, UNDP or UNFPA, and United Nations agencies, analysing how the basic principle underlying United Nations development activities remained valid in the light of evolving circumstances. In the current world situation, the demand for the resources, expertise and services of the United Nations development system was strong and growing. The challenge was to enable all parts of the system to perform at their best and cooperate effectively. The growth of national execution, for example, altered but by no means decreased the importance of United Nations support.

29. Each of the various substantive and programmatic areas called for contributions from the system as a whole. UNDP played a central role by providing funds and guidance for the common effort, pooling the capabilities of agency partners, providing the services of resident representatives not only for the funding agency but also for entities like DTCD which had no separate field representation, and providing United Nations resident coordinators for the operational activities of the entire system.

30. The future arrangements for United Nations multilateral technical cooperation would be heavily influenced by the successor support cost arrangements currently under consideration. In considering that highly complex issue, the Council should bear in mind paragraph 1 of its decision 90/26, which stressed that the new arrangements should be structured to

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strengthen the capacities for technical support, promote coherence and coordination, and continue to reflect the principles of tripartite partnership as a distinctive characteristic of development assistance, irrespective of execution modality.

31. The Department had been conducting in-depth consultations with UNFPA and UNDP to reach a consensus on future arrangements and ensure a smooth transition from the existing arrangements. DTCD executed a substantial programme for UNFPA and had, in good faith, undertaken intensive consultations with senior officials of the Fund concerning successor arrangements for UNFPA projects. In those consultations, it had become clear that the proposals being advanced extended well beyond the issue of support costs and were designed to establish an entirely new system in order to drastically alter the delivery of technical assistance in the population field. The fundamental issue was a proposed arrangement whereby UNFPA would become an executing agency. That had not been the intention of Member States in adopting decision 90/26.

32. In its relationship with the United Nations, UNFPA should remain a funding agency, while DTCD or the regional commissions, as appropriate, continued to act as executing agencies at the country and regional levels. The United Nations role in the formulation of population policy had been established long before the Fund had come into existence. The proposed arrangement would drastically reduce the Organization's role in programme and project activities and deny developing countries access to perhaps the largest and best organized source of multidisciplinary expertise in the population field available within the United Nations system. The UNFPA proposals, if accepted, would in time diminish and fragment the technical and substantive capabilities of the system to the point of destroying them. It was hard to understand how that could possibly serve the interests of developing countries or of UNFPA itself.

33. He hoped that the Council would recognize the dangers of transforming UNFPA into an executing agency and abandoning the tripartite relationship that had served its operations so well, and would allow time for all concerned to give serious consideration to alternative possibilities that would make use of the strong substantive capacity within DTCD and other parts of the United Nations system in the population field.

34. Concerning the proposed arrangements with UNDP, he pointed out that while one could only welcome steps to strengthen programmatic approaches to redressing development problems, action to deal with those problems could come about only through the formulation and implementation of projects. Governing Council decision 90/26 established a new programmatic facility, Technical Services Support. The Department welcomed the new facility for technical services in support of developing countries in the context of the new programme orientation, and regarded its work as additional to that covered by existing support cost arrangements.

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35. With regard to projects, the provisions of decision 90/26 concerning technical support at the project level raised serious concerns that should be carefully considered. Technical support at the project level was envisaged as being provided in relation to the various phases of the project cycle. The Department's consultations with UNDP suggested that the resources to be made available for that purpose would be grossly inadequate to meet the servicing requirements of developing countries. Moreover, the success of national execution might be jeopardized if, as a result of budgetary constraints, agencies were unable to provide technical services when they were most needed.

36. A third element of the new system outlined in Governing Council decision 90/26 related to administrative and operational support for projects. Under the proposed new system, developing countries would have to pay for services rendered by large executing agencies such as DTCD from their scarce IPF resources. If a Government turned to the Office for Project Services (OPS) or the World Bank to provide operational support services, the costs of providing such services would be borne by UNDP itself from the central resources at its disposal. Such a system would, for economic reasons alone, induce most Governments to turn to OPS or the World Bank, instead of one of the major technical or specialized agencies, for assistance even though those agencies might have the experience and technical expertise that was most relevant to their particular needs.

37. He regretted to say that there was due cause for serious concern. If the proposed arrangements for the future conduct of technical cooperation activities were instituted without modification, the result could be a substantial marginalization of the role of the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned, at the expense of developing countries. It would represent de facto abrogation of the valuable tripartite partnership, which ensured political neutrality, unconditionality, commercial disinterestedness and shared responsibility. It would weaken the technical services developed over many years within the United Nations, and would give an overwhelming role to OPS and the World Bank as the main providers of support services to Governments.

38. The Governing Council and all Member States should bear in mind the concerns expressed by the Joint Inspection Unit in its 1984 report to the General Assembly on the Office for Project Execution, the predecessor of OPS (A/39/80). The report stated that successive legislative mandates over the past decade had in effect removed whatever institutional limitations in the United Nations system might have justified the creation of OPE in the early 1970s. The Inspectors had also pointed out that UNDP was the only major executing agency of the United Nations system without an institutionalized technical brain to guide its field operations. As a result, technical backstopping was the most vulnerable aspect of OPE-executed projects. Citing a number of weaknesses associated with OPE subcontracting, the report referred to lack of adequate technical monitoring of the work of subcontractors, insufficient knowledge of the host country, UNDP rules and the system's

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

technical cooperation policies, insufficient emphasis on the need to transfer skills to nationals, preponderant reliance on external inputs in project implementation and little reliance on domestic organizations, consultants and material resources.

39. The JIU report went on to express the belief that OPE was to some extent duplicating the delivery capacity available within the United Nations system and that its operational activities constituted an unwelcome precedent for other United Nations funding organizations such as UNEP and UNFPA. The Inspectors had further stated that it was difficult to justify having OPE act on behalf of UNDP as an executing agency when it had no specialized expertise of its own, and had recommended that the Governing Council provide new terms of reference for UNDP direct execution and that the staff and other resources of OPE be correspondingly reduced over a three-year period.

40. He commended document A/39/80 to the Council for further consideration. It should be noted that the volume of projects executed by OPS had increased to three to four times the level prevailing at the time of the appraisal undertaken by JIU in 1984.

41. A recent study prepared by the Nordic countries suggested that consideration might be given to merging DTCD and OPS. Although there might be merit in doing so since that would lead to considerable savings and eliminate duplication, there was no particular justification for merging only the Department with UNDP. In view of the essential distinction between a funding agency and an executing agency, the best approach would be to separate OPS from UNDP and incorporate it into DTCD. A recent study on the UNDP senior management structure had noted that the very existence of OPS gave rise to basic questions about the United Nations system of development assistance, questions which required fundamental institutional and policy decisions at the highest level.

42. He stressed the current close cooperation between UNDP and the Department and hoped that the recent consultations in the context of Governing Council decision 90/37 would lead to an even closer working relationship which maximized the strengths of each of them in the interests of developing countries. The Department viewed implementation of the main elements of that decision as the basis for greater cooperation in a broad range of efforts. The comparative strengths and capabilities of UNDP and DTCD could be utilized to greater advantage, since there were many areas where the technical expertise and administrative competence of DTCD could be used. Nevertheless, the closer relationship must not be one simply of cooperation between OPS and the Department but should evolve into a number of broader cooperative initiatives between DTCD and UNDP as equal partners.

43. UNDP had indicated that greater consultation and participation would be ensured in the future on matters of mutual interest. DTCD, for its part, wished to continue to explore several such opportunities in the coming

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

months. It also looked forward to further discussions with UNFPA which, it hoped, would lead to agreement on successor arrangements and cooperation in the interests of developing countries.

44. The Council should recognize that the Department and other specialized agencies possessed a great deal of expertise, substantive research and related capabilities, which were placed at the disposal of developing countries in supporting UNDP-funded projects under the current system. Since the new approaches being proposed by UNDP and UNFPA would reduce developing countries' access to the agencies' expertise, they were likely to jeopardize countries' access to the broader capabilities that had developed under the agencies' regular budget programmes. The Council should have a clear understanding of how the proposed new arrangements were expected to function operationally within UNDP and in the field, and how that modus operandi would affect the access of developing countries to the technical capabilities and services of the United Nations system. Whatever arrangements the Governing Council decided upon, they should preserve the tripartite partnership, be uniformly applicable to all programmes and agencies of the system, and guarantee continued access for developing countries to the technical expertise and experience of the United Nations system.

45. Mr. EDGREN (Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation, United Nations Development Programme) said that the report by the Administrator on cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the Department for Technical Cooperation for Development (DP/1991/42) highlighted areas of cooperation between the two organizations and referred to the joint task force set up in 1984 which had looked into the possibility of closer cooperation and integration of the project management and support activities of OPE and DTCD. The joint task force had drawn up draft guidelines to serve as a basis for future closer cooperation between UNDP (OPS) and the Department. It was hoped that the draft guidelines would be finalized in the near future.

46. In the meantime, agreement had been reached between UNDP and DTCD for the Department to participate as an observer in meetings of the OPS Project Acceptance Committee. It was hoped that that arrangement would lead to greater participation by DTCD as an associate agency in projects under direct UNDP execution and to more rational utilization of the logistical and administrative support project execution facilities of the two organizations. UNDP was fully committed to closer cooperation with the Department in order to eliminate duplication of administrative support activities and involve DTCD more actively in various aspects of UNDP activities.

47. Ms. STAMATOPOULOU-ROBBINS (United Nations Centre for Human Rights) referred to the "Human Development Report, 1991", the introduction to which stated that it was about human freedom and the process of human development, about the sensible reallocation of resources to serve humanity better by involving as many people as possible in the creative use of those resources rather than only a few vested interests, and about participatory development

(Ms. Stamatopoulou-Robbins)

where people were placed at the centre of decision-making. The adoption of those criteria was a gratifying achievement. To assert that there was a right to development, as the General Assembly had forcefully done, was to proclaim that the benefits of development should accrue to the individual in the context of the active exercise of his or her rights and freedoms. Development and human rights were interdependent, complementary, indivisible and mutually reinforcing.

48. The Centre's programme of advisory services and technical assistance and cooperation in the field of human rights was proving to be an effective instrument for contributing to the development process by encouraging wide popular participation based on adherence to human rights norms. The programme was offered in response to requests from Governments or other qualified entities, was tailored to the needs of the requesting party, was executed so as to reflect the full range of the standards and implementation procedures applied by the United Nations, made use of the best available expertise and endeavoured to be innovative.

49. Among other types of assistance, the programme helped to build or strengthen national or regional human rights institutions and infrastructures; draft new democratic constitutions; organize free and fair political elections; develop democratic legislation and set up supervisory machinery; train law enforcement officers and administrators of justice; award human rights fellowships; and translate into local languages and print international human rights instruments.

50. The concept of democratic participation was central to the achievement of sustainable development. The value of technical cooperation and assistance programmes would be immensely enhanced by incorporating the key parameters of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Centre for Human Rights was prepared to contribute to that task to the best of its ability, and the requirements and aspirations of developing countries would receive priority attention.

51. Mr. AEAZ (Malaysia) took note of the main substantive areas in which DTCD was involved and expressed concern that, in the attempts to cover as many areas of development as possible, the Department might duplicate the efforts of other specialized agencies of the United Nations system and so use resources less effectively. It was Malaysia's view that the Department should concentrate its activities in areas within its competence. By streamlining its activities, it would enhance the quality of its services while optimizing its resource use. The proposal to limit the Department's activities was motivated only by a desire to avoid unnecessary and unhealthy competition for projects among United Nations agencies.

52. In Malaysia, the Department had helped develop a new mining code, model agreement and mineral title system, a project on airborne geophysical surveys in Sarawak and, most recently, a project on the development of the economy of

(Mr. Aeaz, Malaysia)

the state of Kedah. His Government had recently been rather dissatisfied with the Department's services, particularly with reference to the Kedah project. Delays in designating experts for the project had made it unlikely that it would be able to provide timely inputs for the 1993 mid-term review of Malaysia's Sixth Plan. Also, there was a tendency for the Department's experts to be recruited from one particular region or school of thought. His Government, like any other recipient country, would like executing agencies to propose suitable experts from as many countries as possible.

53. He suggested that the reference to Sarawak in paragraph 42 of document DP/1991/41/Add.1 should be corrected so as to clarify the political status of Sarawak, which was a state of Malaysia, not an independent, sovereign State.

54. His delegation noted that there was no consistency in the information which the report gave on the various agencies. The amount of technical assistance was clearly quoted for some, but not for others. That information was important, as it would indicate the financial resources invested for technical assistance and the areas where the agencies provided assistance. Member Governments could then explore the possibility of using the agencies' technical assistance.

55. His Government expressed its appreciation to the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control for its support to Malaysia's narcotics control and prevention programmes, and was especially supportive of the Fund's effort to develop subregional strategies where drug problems were particularly serious. The success of such strategies depended upon the willingness of neighbouring countries to commit themselves to joint operations. There was, however, a tendency for the Fund to focus on supply-reduction programmes; he hoped that the Fund would be more assertive in convincing donor countries that priority should be given to demand-reduction programmes.

56. Mr. SORENSEN (Denmark), speaking also on behalf of Finland, Norway and Sweden welcomed initiatives to promote closer cooperation between OPS and DTCD. The Nordic countries hoped that such cooperation would result in a more effective division of labour, thereby reducing costs, eliminating duplication of administrative support activities and, in the end, optimizing technical support activities in recipient countries. The process was too slow, however. A joint task force had been established in August 1984 with the purpose of exploring ways and means of promoting closer collaboration between DTCD and UNDP's Office for Projects Execution in the use of their respective capabilities. Draft guidelines had been drawn up but never applied. Since then, only small steps had been taken and cooperative initiatives had been taken on an ad hoc basis and not as part of an overall agreement. The Nordic countries felt that the time had come, or rather was overdue, for the two organizations to explore their future relationship in depth.

57. The final report of the Nordic project on the reform of the United Nations in the economic field had proposed that in order to avoid duplication

(Mr. Sorensen, Denmark)

of effort and make savings, consideration should be given to incorporating DTCD into OPS. Without going that far, the Nordic Governments agreed that the issue of cooperation between DTCD and OPS should be considered in a much broader perspective and that the advantages of a merger should be seriously considered. A more detailed analysis of each entity's capabilities was clearly needed, and the Nordic countries looked forward to a comprehensive report on the matter as a basis for discussions on a possible recommendation to the General Assembly. They suggested that the Governing Council should adopt a decision requesting such a report.

58. Mr. ZHANG Guanghui (China) said that his delegation saw DTCD as the major player in multilateral cooperation, and one that had consistently given assistance to developing countries. The total value of its projects over the past year had been $181 million, which was $19 million more than the previous year, with an 80 per cent delivery rate. The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/211, had recognized the significance of national execution in helping recipient countries become more self-reliant and had made national execution the model for regulating technical assistance.

59. The Department had accumulated expertise in many scientific and technical fields and had always been the major executing agency for projects and programmes funded by UNDP. His delegation hoped that the Department would make the fullest use of its technical expertise while giving free rein to development in recipient countries. Cooperation between UNDP and the Department should be broad and extensive; the two should join in clarifying their respective operational spheres, so as to avoid overlapping, especially in public administration and technical support activities.

60. Mr. SAHLMANN (Germany) welcomed the Nordic countries' proposal for a comprehensive report on cooperation between DTCD and OPS. The idea of engaging an independent consultant seemed a good one, as the question had been open for years without any solution being found.

61. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) expressed some sympathy for Malaysia with respect to the Department's operations which had been somewhat opportunistic in recent years. A review of the future relationship between the Department and OPS was long overdue.

62. Mr. CHEKAU (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he believed that the Department and the USSR could cooperate successfully. The documents before the Council illustrated the dynamic development of the Department and its active role in assisting developing countries. The increased volume of projects over the past few years spoke for itself. He questioned whether such dynamic development should be interrupted by restructuring, for instance by a merger with OPS. Any such action should be approached with great caution. The documents showed that the Department was carrying out a broad range of activities, including some new departures. He understood its wish to diversify, and welcomed such diversification provided that it did not result in any duplication of effort.

(Mr. Chekau, USSR)

63. Many aspects of the successor arrangements, although not strictly pertinent to the agenda item under discussion, were extremely important to DTCD, and the concern of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department was understandable. The Department was the Secretariat's main representative in technical cooperation, although not the only one. The Soviet Union carried out broad cooperation within the framework of the DTCD quite fruitfully, and hoped that that cooperation would grow.

64. Mr. BOGNER (Austria) expressed full support for the proposal made by the representative of Denmark, as endorsed by the representatives of Canada and Germany. His delegation too would welcome the submission, as soon as possible, of a detailed study on the possibility of closer cooperation - or even a merger - between DTCD and OPS.

65. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased to note the active role of DTCD in Africa and the least developed countries and its focus on national capacity building and human resources development. It regarded cooperation with DTCD as a valuable way of enlarging the scope of the assistance it provided to African countries: thanks to the expertise of DTCD, the Africa Initiative project had produced positive results.

66. While DTCD had developed a valuable breadth of expertise, it had undertaken activities in such disparate fields that the overall impact might be diminished. Note should be taken of the need to improve sustainability. As to the question of cooperation with UNDP, the objective of a more effective division of labour remained to be fulfilled. The participation of DTCD in the OPS Project Acceptance Committee was a step in the right direction, but both DTCD and UNDP should be working to promote broader joint initiatives. His delegation was somewhat disappointed that the report contained no specific information either on areas of duplication or on ways to strengthen cooperation. The proposals made by the delegation of Denmark and others for a restructuring of DTCD were of great interest and deserved serious consideration at the next session of the Governing Council.

67. Mr. JI Chaozhu (Under-Secretary-General, Department of Technical Cooperation for Development), replying to comments by Council members, informed the representative of Malaysia that he would look into the kedah project as a matter of urgency and ensure that schedules were kept as far as possible in line with the original plans. While agreeing that the experts selected should be the best available, regardless of their nationality, he understood that the selection in the case concerned had been a result of insistence by the Government of Malaysia.

68. With regard to the relationship between DTCD and UNDP, it was of course very important to avoid any wastage of resources. Intensive consultations with UNDP had not yet yielded any substantive results, but he looked forward to further consultations and would welcome an independent study.

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

69. In conclusion, he welcomed the prospect of enhanced cooperation with the Soviet Union and hoped to be in a position to report further progress at the next session of the Governing Council.

70. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) endorsed the proposal made by the Nordic countries, Germany and Canada and said she hoped that a further study on cooperation between DTCD and OPS would be submitted to the Council's thirty-ninth session.

71. Mr. MOYE (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had, as long ago as 1984, felt that a merger of DTCD and OPS would be desirable. It therefore strongly supported the proposal for a broad review of the issue and hoped that the Governing Council would call for a report to be submitted at the next session.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.

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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 6 June 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. JASINSKI (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE

(c) REFUGEES, DISPLACED PERSONS AND RETURNEES (DP/1991/20)

1. Mr. PRIESTLEY (Senior Adviser for Humanitarian Affairs), introducing the agenda item, said that it stemmed from Governing Council decision 90/22. That decision had: emphasized that development programmes could promote durable solutions to emergencies involving displaced persons and refugees; stressed that relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development were part of a continuum, and that the role of the Resident Coordinator should be recognized in that context; supported the agreement between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to draw up annual joint work programmes and the continued participation of UNDP in supporting Governments in areas affected by large-scale population displacements, in close collaboration with other United Nations agencies and programmes and non-governmental organizations; authorized the Administrator to utilize Special Programme Resources in assessing the needs arising from population displacement; and invited the Economic and Social Council to request the Secretary-General to initiate a review of the capacity of the United Nations system to assist affected countries in meeting the needs of refugees, displaced persons and returnees.

2. Document DP/1991/20 had been based on several key considerations. First, as the report of the Economic and Social Council would not be issued until the following month, care had been taken to avoid including in the document any proposal which might pre-empt the Economic and Social Council's decision.

3. Secondly, the emphasis had been placed on utilizing the potential of the UNDP field structure in a manner which complemented, rather than conflicted with, the mandates of other organizations of the United Nations system. UNDP had a network of 114 field offices which was at the service of both the host countries and the United Nations system as a whole; UNDP representatives frequently acted on behalf of a number of United Nations agencies which did not have direct representation in the country concerned. Thus a high priority had been placed on forging close and practical links with those organizations.

4. Thirdly, attention had been concentrated on the relief and development spectrum. The bureaucratic separation of emergency responses from normal development planning often hampered the effective management of both relief and development efforts. Prevention and preparedness programmes were also a prominent feature of the combined approach.

5. Appropriate training for UNDP staff and staff members of other organizations before, during and after emergencies was essential. Training courses funded under the Disaster Management Training Programme had already begun. The Programme, jointly managed by UNDP and the Office of the United

(Mr. Priestley)

Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), had recruited staff members from several United Nations agencies as trainers, and had already attracted the support of major donor countries.

6. Clearly, maximum use should be made of UNDP institutions. The regional bureaux would be central to all operational and policy issues, in close collaboration with the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation. Technical cooperation among developing countries was particularly appropriate in the context of famine prevention and preparedness strategies. The use of United Nations Volunteers in situations involving displaced populations had been extraordinarily effective. In the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, 60 United Nations Volunteers were either working or about to be assigned to various agencies. The experience of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was obviously of great relevance, since more than 70 per cent of the world's displaced persons were women and children. Lastly, a strong emphasis should be placed on evaluation, so as to build up an institutional memory and thereby increase programme effectiveness.

7. Over the next few years, efforts would be made to strengthen the already excellent relationship between UNDP and UNHCR in the search for durable solutions to refugee problems. Likewise, the long-standing partnership between UNDP and UNDRO and other United Nations agencies needed to be developed.

8. Turning to the proposed humanitarian programmes support unit, he said that the proposal for a new headquarters unit might appear to be at odds with current streamlining concerns. However, in recent years there had been an upsurge in emergencies, resulting in displacement and suffering on an unprecedented scale. The UNDP field office network had been at the forefront of the international community's response, and had required substantial assistance and backstopping from headquarters. In addition, the resident representatives in six African countries were acting as the Secretary-General's special coordinators for Emergency Relief Operations. UNDP had also been heavily involved in the efforts of the United Nations system to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from the Gulf crisis.

9. In the next few years, developing countries were likely to face further emergencies, resulting in an even higher level of suffering and economic damage. In Africa alone, there were more than 13 million displaced persons and 5.4 million refugees. Even as he spoke, as many as 300,000 Sudanese refugees who had been forced out of Ethiopia were facing grim prospects in the strife-torn swamp areas of southern Sudan.

10. Against that background, the Administrator had proposed the establishment, on an experimental basis, of the humanitarian programmes support unit. The Administrator was determined that the proposed unit should not become in any way operationally independent, but should provide support both to the field and to headquarters. Its primary responsibility would be to

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ensure liaison with other organizations of the United Nations system involved in emergency assistance and with bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations. It would also, in close consultation with the regional bureaux and the Bureau for Programme and Evaluation, promote activities relating to emergency preparedness within the programming and project cycles of UNDP, including UNDP participation in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

11. Mr. KABA (Senior Adviser, New York Office, Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator) said that UNDRO welcomed the establishment of a formal focal point within UNDP to follow matters relating to emergencies, including those relating to refugees and displaced persons.

12. Recent emergencies world wide seemed to have captured the attention, not only of Governments around the world, but also of United Nations bodies. Such increased interest in disaster mitigation and relief was cause for satisfaction. However, when it came to saving lives and making the best possible use of scarce resources, it was important for mitigation and relief operations to be well coordinated and effective.

13. To the outside observer, it might sometimes seem that each organization of the United Nations was attempting to cover the whole spectrum of relief activities. When an emergency occurred, it appeared to be difficult for agencies to confine themselves to their field of specialization. At times, it was as if the organization which was first to arrive on the scene became the de facto lead agency for relief efforts. What was needed, therefore, was a clear division of responsibilities in order to avoid misallocation of resources and disorganization of the operation.

14. With regard to the proposed new unit within UNDP, it should be recalled that UNDP resident representatives were ex officio UNDRO representatives at the country level. Their mandate in that regard derived from the mandate of UNDRO. That was the first and most direct link between UNDRO and UNDP. A second important link between the two organizations was in the area of disaster mitigation, which should be effectively built into the development process. Furthermore, since the responsibility of UNDRO ended with the relief phase, rehabilitation and reconstruction should be carried out by UNDP.

15. Obviously, the effectiveness of the two organizations' action at the country level, in both relief and mitigation, depended largely upon the quality of their cooperation and on visible support from the UNDP Administration at headquarters. In that context, he welcomed the establishment of the unit as an effective counterpart to UNDRO which should further strengthen the overall cooperation between UNDRO and UNDP.

16. Mr. PETERS (Director, New York Liaison Office, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that since the adoption in 1951 of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the problems of uprooted populations, of which refugees were a significant proportion, had multiplied. In the first quarter of 1991 alone, the refugee population had grown by about 2 million, as Kurds and other Iraqi nationals had sought refuge, and as hundreds of thousands had fled from continuing conflicts in the Horn of Africa and Liberia.

17. In addition to the approximately 17 million refugees, a nearly equal number of persons had been displaced from their homes and rendered destitute; they frequently had no civil rights. Approximately 70 per cent were women and children who were struggling to survive in the poorest regions of the poorest countries in the world.

18. A number of practical and operational initiatives had been taken over the past year in accordance with Governing Council decision 90/22, General Assembly resolution 44/137 and decisions of the Executive Committee of UNHCR on the need for a coordinated approach by the United Nations system in general and UNDP and UNHCR in particular.

19. Those initiatives had led to broad agreement between UNDP and UNHCR on a joint work programme which focused on: identifying areas of cooperation at the regional, subregional and country levels; formulating joint programmes; and making appropriate management training arrangements so as to better prepare UNHCR and UNDP staff for the emergency and longer-term development phases of coping with the problems raised by uprootedness. Subsequently, copies of a joint letter signed by the UNDP Administrator and the High Commissioner outlining the main objectives of the joint work programme and requesting the support and the direct participation of the field offices in their fulfilment had been sent to all UNDP and UNHCR field representatives. Document DP/1991/20 contained a comprehensive report on the progress made on the joint work programme and on other joint ventures which had not been foreseen, such as the system-wide interventions in several emergency operations.

20. Key objectives for the following year must include: a more intensive pursuit of the ongoing joint work programme; the establishment of a common strategy with other relevant agencies, including non-governmental organizations; joint planning and programme development starting at the field level and the mobilization of additional resources; the harmonization of criteria, indicators and other planning, implementation and monitoring parameters with a view to the institutionalization of coordination; the establishment of evaluation instruments to measure human resources development with special emphasis on the conditions of women and children; the establishment and strengthening, in conjunction with other relevant organizations, of standing arrangements to provide a rapid and effective system-wide response at the outset of major emergencies; the joint planning of exercises for the identification of locations and sectors of activity for

(Mr. Peters)

future joint programme development; and the intensification of joint training and technical support and the sharing of expertise and information.

21. Mr. VAN UFFORD (Netherlands) welcomed the current consensus within the international community on the relationship between emergency aid and development aid. Emergency aid should be linked as much as possible with the development process under way in a disaster-struck region.

22. UNDP had no primary role to play in emergency relief efforts. Its work began in the aftermath of a disaster, in creating the conditions for a speedy recovery of the afflicted areas and the successful reintegration of those uprooted. At the initial stage of any disaster, however, organizations such as UNDRO, UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross would provide the necessary immediate relief.

23. His delegation welcomed the increased cooperation between UNDP and UNHCR and between UNDP and UNDRO, as discussed in document DP/1991/20. The training of UNDP field staff in disaster management was very useful, especially since UNDP representatives in Africa played a significant role in emergency aid.

24. With regard to the proposed humanitarian programmes support unit, which would, among other things, evaluate proposals to be financed from the $500 million Special Programme Resources allocation, his delegation questioned the need to set up a separate unit for that purpose. First, the number of units reporting directly to the Administrator should be limited. Secondly, the functions proposed for the new unit should be carried out by the Special Adviser within the existing UNDP structure. If an emergency situation required UNDP efforts, they should take place in the field and not at headquarters. The emphasis should be on consolidating, strengthening and coordinating UNDP activities in the field.

25. Furthermore, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly were planning to conduct a thorough review of the entire United Nations response to emergency situations. It was important not to pre-empt the outcome of those deliberations by changing the UNDP structure responsible for that area. His delegation proposed that a discussion should be held at the Council's session on the implications of the General Assembly's debate for UNDP emergency relief activities.

26. Ms. SUOMALAINEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and her own country, said that the Nordic countries had been calling for a system-wide approach to the overlapping activities or gaps in meeting the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. The Nordic United Nations project and General Assembly discussions on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and UNDRO had highlighted the emergency response needs and problems of the United Nations system, and valuable ideas had emerged.

(Ms. Suomalainen, Finland)

27. UNDP should not be moulded increasingly into an organization for meeting emergency needs. Instead, it should strengthen its role in areas in which it had a comparative advantage among United Nations organizations and other related actors. Its field structure should be a strong one, and its task should be to help develop national capacities to handle the long-term social and economic consequences of emergencies and increasing problems relating to refugees, displaced persons and returnees. The resident representative's multiple role as country programme manager, resident coordinator and coordinating authority of the United Nations response in emergencies underscored the need to recognize that the issues were interrelated.

28. The appointment of a Senior Adviser for Humanitarian Affairs facilitated UNDP's active participation in the process of clarifying issues relating to the emergency response of the United Nations system in general, and the respective roles of United Nations organizations in particular. The strategic plan of action for field coordination efforts should have been more completely outlined in document DP/1991/20, and the descriptions of UNDP's role, operational response and comparative advantage were merely touched upon. However, the Nordic countries saw no need for the establishment of a separate humanitarian programme support unit within UNDP. The Programme's emergency response and rehabilitation activities should be carried out within the framework of its country programmes and development activities and based, like all its undertakings, on continuous dialogue with affected countries to assess needs and ensure early involvement of national capacities.

29. The Nordic countries welcomed the efforts of UNHCR and UNDP to develop a common database on matters relating to refugees and displaced persons, as well as the joint UNDP/UNDRO management of the Disaster Management Training Programme. However, the idea of recruiting consultants to develop model projects for rapid response in emergency needs assessment was not viable, as such proposals tended to reflect an approach which undermined the mandate of UNDP as the bridge-building organization on the continuum from relief to development. In that connection, she underscored the importance of UNDP assistance to countries in defining preparedness to deal with the developmental needs of returnee populations.

30. The question of how to deal with displaced persons was particularly difficult, since no United Nations organization had a specific mandate in that area. Support for the development of large displaced populations formed an important variable in all needs assessments and in the country programming process of UNDP.

31. The Nordic countries firmly believed that the two studies proposed in paragraph 30 of document DP/1991/20 should not be undertaken by UNDP. The study on the use of market mechanisms for addressing the immediate food needs of vulnerable groups in cases of disaster management fell within the mandate of the World Food Programme, and the question of regional approaches for dealing with refugees, returnees and displaced persons should, at least

(Ms. Suomalainen, Finland)

preliminarily, be addressed by the review - to be discussed at the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council.

32. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) expressed his delegation's appreciation to the resident representatives for their work as resident coordinators during the massive movement of displaced persons in the Persian Gulf region and in other disaster situations.

33. His delegation welcomed UNDP's joint efforts with other agencies concerned, including UNHCR and UNDRO, in the field of disaster management, and supported the idea that UNDP should adjust its normal programme activities to take into account the special development needs of people uprooted by emergency situations. Accordingly, it had no objection to the establishment of a focal point within UNDP to follow up on matters relating to emergencies, including those affecting refugees and displaced persons.

34. However, while it was appropriate for UNDP to strengthen relief-to-development linkages throughout its field operations, thereby strengthening coordination between UNDP and UNDRO, UNDP should neither replace nor assume the functions of UNDRO simply because the latter had extremely limited financial and human resources compared with those of UNDP. The continuum of emergency relief, rehabilitation and development did not imply that UNDP should expand its mandate and become deeply involved with relief and rehabilitation activities. True, there was at times a grey zone wherein activities in those areas overlapped, but the various executing agencies should abide by their own specific mandates in emergency operations, rather than try to expand into that grey zone, and should maintain a clear division of responsibilities in order to avoid duplication of effort.

35. While his delegation recognized the need to establish early warning systems and contingency planning programmes, it was unfortunate that document DP/1991/20 made no reference to the relevant activities of the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. That demonstrated a lack of close coordination among executing agencies, a shortcoming which should be corrected in the future.

36. Mr. MISSARY (Observer for Yemen) expressed disappointment that document DP/1991/20 had not been made available to delegations sooner, in all working languages. It was also regrettable that there was no reference in the document to the fact that his country had received 1 million refugees and their families as a result of the Gulf crisis. Developments in the Horn of Africa in May had brought more refugees and displaced persons to Yemen, a situation which had necessitated the postponement or cancellation of many vital projects so that the Government could deal with the emergency. Since his country was among the least developed countries and was itself vulnerable to earthquakes and other natural disasters, it appreciated contributions that had been made to defray some of the expenses relating to the influx of refugees.

(Mr. Missary, Observer, Yemen)

37. He thanked UNDP and the relevant Funds for their work on behalf of refugees and displaced persons, and expressed the hope that Yemen would receive greater support for its efforts in the future.

38. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that in view of the likelihood of a continuing increase in the frequency and possible magnitude of natural and man-made disasters, his country was pleased to sponsor and cooperate in activities related to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. UNDP deserved the admiration of the entire international community for its efforts in coordinating assistance to the victims of drought and conflict in Ethiopia, the Sudan and elsewhere in the world.

39. UNDP should be commended in particular for its efforts to ensure more effective preparation of its professional staff, particularly resident representatives, for disaster management through the joint UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme. His delegation agreed that emergencies required "a speedy, well-coordinated and highly professional response from the United Nations system", but reserved comment on the proposed humanitarian programmes support unit pending clarification of its anticipated disaster preparedness and management training activities and their relationship to activities currently carried out under the UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme. It would also appreciate information on the improved coordination of relief efforts within the United Nations system.

40. Pending those clarifications, he encouraged UNDP to present interested Governments with a more detailed rationalization of the proposed activities on behalf of refugees, displaced persons and returnees. As currently envisaged, the proposed unit would be part of the UNDP administration and therefore should be financed from its administrative budget.

41. Mr. FONDI (Italy) commended UNDP, with its rich experience at the field level, for its efforts on behalf of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. While UNDP could deal with certain specific aspects of relief and emergency aid, it should concentrate its action in the field of recovery, rehabilitation and development programmes to benefit refugees. In the interests of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, cooperation at the headquarters and local levels between UNDP and other relevant United Nations bodies, particularly UNHCR, was essential in order to avoid overlapping and duplication of efforts. Commendable examples of such coordination were the UNDP/UNHCR collaboration in Quang Ninh province of Viet Nam and the "team approach" described in the report (DP/1991/20, para. 28). While his delegation did not object in principle to the proposed establishment of a humanitarian programmes support unit, it would be wiser to await the system-wide study of capacity in matters pertaining to refugees before taking a decision on the proposal.

(Mr. Fondi, Italy)

42. In conclusion, his delegation was pleased with the manner in which UNDP was managing the Regional Development Programme for Displaced Persons in Central America. His Government planned to provide more than $US 100 million over a five-year period, including $US 20 million in 1991. Coordination of the programme with UNHCR was proceeding very well.

43. Mr. HARRISON (United Kingdom) said that recent events in many parts of the world underscored the need for a speedy, well-coordinated and highly professional response to emergencies from the United Nations system (DP/1991/20, para. 32). UNDP should play its full part in that regard, in coordination with other relevant agencies, particularly at the field level. His country would continue to support the activities described in the report.

44. While his delegation was sympathetic to the idea of establishing a humanitarian programmes support unit, a careful review of the administrative and budgetary aspects was needed. With respect to the proposed development of an "institutional memory" for UNDP referred to in paragraph 35 of the report, the issue was not confined to UNDP: it sometimes seemed as if the United Nations believed it needed to reinvent the wheel each time there was a major disaster. The work to be carried out in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly concerning refugees and displaced persons and, more generally, the United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies, also had to be taken into account.

45. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that there was an emerging international consensus that the United Nations emergency humanitarian response capability must be institutionalized and regularized, possibly in the context of other United Nations reforms. Her delegation greatly appreciated UNDP's efforts to improve the ability of the United Nations to respond to emergencies and, therefore, as an interim measure, it supported the establishment of a humanitarian programmes support unit, pending careful consideration of the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council in the light of the system-wide review to be discussed at that Council's next session. The continuation of the unit in the next biennium must be considered in the context of more systematic approaches to the emergency humanitarian response capacity of the United Nations. Her delegation felt very strongly that the proposed unit should be funded from administrative funds and not from Special Programme Resource funds.

46. Mr. TANTOT (France), underscoring the importance of ensuring the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance and development assistance in areas affected by natural disasters or massive population displacements, said that the role of the resident representatives, in their capacity as representatives of UNDRO, was critical for such coordination. In that connection, it was unfortunate that the Action Plan of the International Conference on Central American Refugees had taken inadequate account of the activities of non-governmental organizations and that cooperation between UNDP and UNHCR had developed too slowly. UNDP should help to establish conditions

(Mr. Tantot, France)

conducive to development, which alone could prevent economically motivated migrations, and should facilitate the return of refugees by restoring such conditions in refugee communities. UNDP should serve as a source of inspiration within the United Nations system and should strive to prevent the permanent settlement of refugees in territories other than their own.

47. That dual role of development catalyst and coordinator should prevail, in order to avoid confusion as to terms of reference and duplication of work. His delegation therefore agreed with the representative of the Netherlands that the focus should be on cooperation in the field. The desirability of establishing a humanitarian programmes support unit should be decided only after the issues to which he had referred had been thoroughly addressed.

48. Mr. SAHLMANN (Germany) said that agreement was needed on the best way to streamline the capacities of UNDP, UNDRO, UNHCR and the Secretariat, enabling them so that they could respond to disasters and cope with increasing flows of refugees as effectively and efficiently as possible. His delegation looked forward to the discussions at the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council, and perhaps at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, on the definition of UNDP's role and institutional capacity.

49. If, ultimately, it was decided to establish the proposed humanitarian programmes support unit, it should be funded from the administrative budget of UNDP and not from Special Programme Resources.

50. Mr. GOMEZ (Associate Administrator) said that the Administrator was pleased with the reaction in the Council to UNDP's activities with respect to refugees, displaced persons and returnees. UNDP was fully committed, as a programme operating under the authority of the Secretary-General and under the supervision of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and, where relevant, the Security Council, to playing whatever role was assigned to it in respect of an issue which, while clearly of pressing humanitarian importance, was also clearly related to the maintenance of peace and security. The role of UNDP in the Gulf crisis was a case in point.

51. UNDP intended to adhere to its mandate and, in so doing, to support the mandates of other organizations, not just for legalistic reasons, but for very simple reasons of efficiency, and in recognition of relative advantages that each offered. The Administrator had already expressed his conviction that there was a real need for a well-articulated, coordinated response to emergency issues on the part of United Nations entities. For the moment, UNDP must operate within established boundaries in fulfilling its dual role of developing policy and programme guidelines at the central programming level, and coordinating the contributions of the United Nations system towards building national capabilities at the field level. Within the continuum of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, emergency response activities actually moved in a continuous loop, since development activities included the enhancement of national capabilities for emergency prevention and preparedness.

52. Mr. PRIESTLEY (Senior Adviser for Humanitarian Affairs) said he was glad that no reservations had been expressed about the practicality of the relief-development continuum approach. However, as the representative of Japan had pointed out, the application of that approach to the somewhat fragmented United Nations system had resulted in areas of overlap. Although the system's development activities could be improved, the improvement of its response to emergencies was more urgent. The international community's heightened interest in emergency response was very encouraging in that respect.

53. The UNDP resident representatives, in their capacity as UNDRO representatives, resident coordinators and WFP representatives, were deeply involved in relief operations and, in serious cases, had been asked by the Secretary-General to work full time on emergency relief issues. The model for emergency response which had been developed over the previous 10 years and refined during the 1984 crisis in Ethiopia was still valid. Under that system, the resident coordinator was given a professional staff, usually through bilateral contributions, to help him in coordinating relief activities with the host Government, United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations. Since such coordination depended heavily on the availability of adequate data, the collection, analysis and dissemination of information was a priority for the coordinating units. The resident coordinator also played a leading role in needs assessment and baseline studies, as well as in developing a unified system for appeals to donors on behalf of Governments. The resident coordinator reported regularly on the progress of relief operations and on the mobilization of funds and the identification of unmet needs, and acted as the focal point for press relations.

54. Those UNDP activities, as well as UNDP assistance to Governments in developing early warning systems and prevention and preparedness strategies, were carried out without encroachment on the mandates of other organizations. In view of ever-increasing needs, it was essential for UNDP to further professionalize its emergency response, at all points of the continuum, by establishing a professional backstopping unit at headquarters. Although the considerable expertise of UNHCR was available to UNDP, the latter should be enabled to reach out to the international community for professional assistance in the field. For the proposed humanitarian programmes support unit, only two new posts were being requested: one for an expert on displaced persons and one for an expert on the development of prevention and preparedness strategies and immediate emergency responses. The establishment of such a unit would in no way pre-empt the outcome of Economic and Social Council discussions; it was simply an in-house measure to improve the UNDP capacity for emergency response.

55. The relationship of UNDP with UNDRO in natural disaster management and with UNHCR in the management of the human problems resulting from such disasters was of vital importance. The progress achieved to date through the programme outlined in the joint letter issued by UNDP and UNHCR had been disappointing because of staff shortages and preoccupation with the Persian Gulf crisis. Although the war in the Gulf had ended, a number of other crises

(Mr. Priestley)

identified in the letter, such as those in Liberia, Rwanda and the Horn of Africa, still remained to be addressed; there were, as yet, no political accords in those areas which would allow even basic relief operations to be carried out.

56. In reply to the point raised by the representative of Japan regarding early warning systems, he noted that a meeting would take place shortly in Geneva, under the auspices of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, on the subject of early warning systems. Millions of dollars had been invested in the development of such systems over the years, particularly in Asia and the Caribbean. In reply to the representative of Yemen, he noted that the long-term response of UNDP to the consequences of the Gulf war would be outlined in document DP/1991/60, and that the request for assistance submitted by Yemen would be considered by the Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) on 7 June 1991.

57. He agreed with the representative of France that the dynamism, high morale and potential for progress of refugee communities was too often overlooked. Much more should be done at the field level to develop the self-help capacities of such communities, and he hoped that closer collaboration with non-governmental organizations in that area would prove fruitful. The overall issue of practical relations between United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations would be addressed shortly by a team of consultants currently being assembled for that purpose.

58. Reverting to the proposed humanitarian programmes support unit, he said that the proposed funding system for the unit was not ideal and that funding from the core budget would be preferable. In view of the reservations which had been expressed regarding the unit, its establishment on a one-year trial basis would be acceptable.

59. Mr. MISSARY (Observer for Yemen) said he hoped that the PAC would take due account of the situation in his country in reviewing Yemen's request for assistance. The forthcoming report on the long-term UNDP response to the consequences of the Gulf war should include a summary of the current situation with respect to refugees, displaced persons and returnees, since their situation was an integral part of the issue. It should also include information on objectives and recent developments in the Horn of Africa: the situation there had given rise to the flow of thousands of refugees into Yemen.

60. Mr. ALOM (Observer for Bangladesh) said that in recent years, the UNDP response to natural disasters in his country, particularly the cyclone of April 1991, and to the serious effects of the Persian Gulf crisis on Bangladesh had been extremely supportive. However, he agreed with other delegations that certain practical issues must be addressed before a decision could be taken on the establishment of a humanitarian programmes support unit. Such a unit might be required to address issues involving responses to all types of emergencies, from natural disasters to political, social and

(Mr. Alom, Observer, Bangladesh)

economic crises. The nature and extent of the proposed unit's involvement in emergencies must therefore be precisely defined.

61. Coordination seemed to be the main problem which the proposal was intended to address. However, that aim could also be accomplished by strengthening the role of the resident coordinators to enable them to carry out their responsibilities to the full extent of their mandates. There was a need for greater coherence in the activities of the resident coordinators, United Nations agencies and recipient Governments. In order to be effective, the proposed programme support unit must have sufficient authority to ensure the vital give and take between Governments and the United Nations system as a whole.

62. Mr. AFOLABI (Nigeria) said that his Government had a history of providing humanitarian relief whenever and wherever the need arose. The critical refugee situation caused by the recent Gulf crisis had strained the resources of UNHCR and other relief agencies, as the number of refugees had increased from 2.8 million to more than 8 million in recent times, and had overshadowed the continuing refugee crisis in Africa. United Nations agencies were making all possible efforts to provide relief for the 800,000 displaced persons in Liberia, but needs still exceeded available assistance. UNDP was especially well-positioned to provide assistance because of its grass-roots connections in the countries of operation, and the establishment of a humanitarian programmes support unit would further facilitate its work. According to paragraph 37 of document DP/1991/20, the Administrator had not included funding for such a unit in his submission for the 1992-1993 administrative budget. Given the importance of the proposed unit, his delegation hoped that a workable funding mechanism could be found.

63. Mr. PRIESTLEY (Senior Adviser for Humanitarian Affairs), in reply to the Observer for Yemen, said that the Governing Council had allocated $500,000 for the year from the Special Programme Resources (SPR) for needs assessments with respect to displaced persons. Although a substantial portion of that amount had already been committed for studies in various countries, he hoped that at least an initial contribution could be made towards alleviating the problems in Yemen. In addition, the Secretary-General had announced, at a recent meeting with African Heads of State and representatives of United Nations agencies, that a high-level mission would be sent to the Persian Gulf region for the purpose of needs assessment and the formulation of proposed United Nations system responses.

64. He agreed with the Observer for Bangladesh that the varying mandates of different relief agencies presented practical problems of coordination. One way of overcoming those problems, which had proved effective in Ethiopia, was to form a standing committee, or "emergency prevention and preparedness group", which involved all partners in relief efforts. However, the Observer for Bangladesh had rightly pointed out that the host countries should be more closely involved, and the programmes support unit, if approved, would work to enhance that involvement.

(Mr. Priestley)

65. In reply to the representative of Nigeria, he said that the positive steps being taken to address the problems in the Persian Gulf region should allow the international community to give due priority to Africa's refugee problems, which were of unprecedented scope and seriousness.

66. The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council agreed that the Drafting Group should begin the elaboration of a draft decision on agenda item 3 (c).

67. It was so decided.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (DP/1991/46)

68. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women) said that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) considered monitoring and evaluation to be one of its strongest functions. The Fund's mandate to be experimental and catalytic, to test new approaches and to be an advocate for women required a capacity to document the process and product of project experience and to disseminate the findings. Already, trends emerging from thematic programme reviews were beginning to guide the Fund's policy directions and programming decisions. In 1990, programme delivery had increased by 45 per cent over 1989. In order to maintain that positive trend, delivery targets would continue to be part of the Fund's performance indicators.

69. Human resources development was a priority both in UNIFEM programmes and in the Fund's personnel policies. The professional development of UNIFEM staff was supported by training opportunities in computer operations, communications, gender analysis, planning, and supervisory skills. The ongoing process of management planning and the new performance appraisal mechanisms had helped rationalize the utilization of the Fund's limited financial and human resources.

70. By the end of 1990, 10 national committees for UNIFEM had been officially established in donor countries and six additional countries were in the process of setting up their committees. The Philippines National Committee, the first national committee to be established in a developing country, would serve as a model for other developing countries. National committees were the Fund's base in a country. They built alliances with women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, the business community, academics and parliamentarians, fostered support among decision-makers, and raised funds from their respective constituencies.

71. Women in developing countries had a vested interest in protecting and improving their environment, and experience showed that they could make a significant contribution to environmental conservation when enabled to do so. All too often, however, in their struggle for survival, women had little choice other than to damage the very environment on which they depended.

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

Moreover, women's knowledge and experience were often completely ignored by those involved in designing and implementing development programmes. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would provide the ideal opportunity to emphasize the impact of environmental degradation on millions of poor women and to highlight the major role women everywhere could play in maintaining the finite ecological resource base.

72. Through a cooperative effort, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNIFEM, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Statistical Office had produced a very important report about the world's women which would be issued later in the month.

73. At the Pledging Conference for 1991, total pledges to the Fund had been estimated at $9.4 million, a 13 per cent increase over pledges for 1990. The national committees, non-governmental organizations and women's organizations had been instrumental in encouraging government contributions and in raising additional resources. The Fund was continuing to seek new avenues of support from foundations and from the private sector.

74. Mr. VAN UFFORD (Netherlands) said that his delegation was in favour of maintaining the Fund as a separate entity in autonomous association with UNDP.

75. The Fund had a relatively high financial reserve. The estimates for the end of 1991 showed an amount of $17.93 million in the reserve fund. Compared to an annual income of about $11 million, that was a considerable figure. In the light of the Consultative Committee's decision to solve the problem of financial accumulations through the introduction of a partial-funding formula, UNIFEM would have to enlarge its programme execution. Such an enlargement should build on the positive results of the Fund's regional programmes. In that way, a certain degree of policy continuity could be guaranteed. His delegation welcomed the Administrator's proposal to increase the Fund's staff by two new posts.

76. The Fund should supply additional information regarding its cooperation with private funds and the conditions under which such funds provided resources to UNIFEM. It would be useful to have an overview of the increase in private funding as compared with the increase in government contributions.

77. Mr. SAHLMANN (Germany) said that the UNIFEM report (DP/1991/46) did not provide sufficient information on the Fund's experimentation with new approaches to promoting the interests of women and its dissemination of the results of such work. Moreover, the report did not give details about how the effect that UNIFEM intended to ensure that experience gained in pilot projects for the promotion of women could be used in projects carried out by other organizations of the United Nations system. It would also be helpful to have more information on the Fund's cooperation with member States. In future, the Fund's reports should contain detailed information on the projects and

(Mr. Sahlmann, Germany)

measures actually implemented during the previous year; it did not suffice to provide figures in the form in which they appeared in the Fund's 1991 report.

78. Mrs. ESGUERRA (Philippines) said that UNIFEM had contributed to the preparation of the first Philippine Development Plan for Women, a companion document to the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan for 1987-1992. Her delegation was pleased that the Fund had continued to provide support by funding a project to assist government ministries in implementing, monitoring, evaluating and updating the Plan. That would ensure that women's concerns and needs would become integral parts of all economic and social sectors of Philippine society.

79. It was gratifying that the Philippine National Committee on UNIFEM was being used as a model for launching national committees in developing countries. The Philippine National Committee would be highly instrumental in emphasizing the relationship between gender and development and expanding support for UNIFEM and its programmes.

80. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that his delegation wished to have more information about the Fund's plans to disseminate information on the results of its projects, ways of multiplying its successes and enlisting the assistance of other development bodies. The Fund should provide details about the results of its assessment of bottlenecks in project implementation by type of implementing agency.

81. Canada did not support any proposal to rearrange the Fund's reporting relationships, since the Fund's success was at least in part due to the Director's direct reporting relationship to the Administrator.

82. In 1991, Canada's contribution to UNIFEM would amount to $Can 1.5 million. Canada also funded one of the Fund's largest projects in Zimbabwe. In a time of budgetary constraint, UNIFEM was one of the few organizations to which Canada would provide an increase in 1991. That increase was in recognition of both the excellence of the Fund's work and of the importance Canada attached to women in development.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Thirty-eighth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 6 June 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

CONTENTS

Other funds and programmes (continued)

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (continued)

United Nations Development Fund for Women (continued) (DP/1991/46)

1. Mr. LIN Lian Ke (China) said that women's participation in economic activities enhanced their social status and promoted the economic and social development of the country as a whole. Accordingly, organizations of the United Nations system, when setting their priorities, should seek to combine other considerations with the advancement of women. UNIFEM had played an active role in providing Asia, Africa and Latin America with small-scale projects that benefited women directly, for example in the food-processing sector. As such activities increased women's levels of employment and income, UNIFEM had contributed to improving the social status of women in developing countries. His Government had always supported UNIFEM and would continue to do so.

2. Ms. HELLSTROM (Sweden), speaking also on behalf of Denmark, Finland and Norway, said that UNIFEM was unique in that it was experimental and catalytic, tested new approaches and was an advocate for women. It provided models on how to integrate women into mainstream development that were useful to the entire United Nations development cooperation system. She welcomed the work done by UNIFEM in setting long-term and short-term priorities and thought that the two areas on which UNIFEM had chosen to concentrate, namely food security and trade and industry, were very relevant to women. Since those topics also fell under the mandate of other United Nations organizations, she was interested in knowing how UNIFEM cooperated with the rest of the United Nations system in enhancing women's economic and social development.

3. Through the efforts of UNIFEM and others, the gender issue had been put on the agenda of most development agencies. She noted with interest UNIFEM's recent efforts to improve the quality of programming and would like to see the process continue; in particular, UNIFEM's capacity to document and disseminate the results of its experimental and catalytic approaches should be strengthened.

4. Mr. FONDI (Italy) said that his delegation was pleased to confirm that Italy had again in 1991 pledged a substantial contribution to UNIFEM, being firmly convinced of the importance of its activities, which were rightly aimed at maximizing the catalytic impact of women's involvement in development. He agreed that food security and trade and industry were the proper priorities for UNIFEM and welcomed its great attention to environmental aspects. Lastly, he welcomed the reorganization of UNIFEM, in particular the devolution of responsibility and the technical improvements in administration.

5. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) expressed her Government's support for UNIFEM's work. Although her delegation believed that gender issues should

(Ms. Pollack, United States)

ideally be integrated into the United Nations development system, and looked forward to the day when there would no longer be a need for a separate fund for women, it supported the very important work being done by UNIFEM.

6. The United States believed that increasing women's access to and production of modern technologies could significantly benefit women. Ways and means of using new and advanced technologies, as well as scientific research, to benefit women should be a focus of the 1995 world conference on women, to which UNIFEM could undoubtedly contribute much.

7. While her delegation supported UNIFEM's experimental and catalytic approach, a reliable system must be in place for deciding which experimental and catalytic projects were valuable and, as Canada had also pointed out, for disseminating the findings. The report was insufficiently clear as to the criteria used by UNIFEM for the selection of projects.

8. The United States commended UNIFEM for its organizational management initiatives, specifically its computerized budget management system, and for its implementation of the Performance Appraisal Review, and applauded UNIFEM's successful efforts to increase its sources of funding. Management of programme resources had been so able that staff growth had been zero for two bienniums.

9. Lastly, with respect to budgets, her delegation wished to know the breakdown between outstanding recommended project approvals and unspent allocations from previous years.

10. Mr. TWITE (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom preferred to make its voluntary contributions to core resources rather than to trust funds, but that it made an exception for UNIFEM because of the great importance of its work. His delegation considered that UNIFEM should concentrate primarily on its catalytic role, to increase awareness of the real needs of women, and should not become involved at the small project level. Project work properly belonged to UNDP and the executing agencies, and there was a danger that UNIFEM's comparatively limited resources would be dissipated. Involvement in project implementation might even marginalize women's issues, achieving the very opposite of UNIFEM's aim.

11. His delegation, like that of Germany, was concerned that the Administrator's report did not attempt the admittedly difficult task of measuring the success rate of the catalytic work undertaken by UNIFEM. It would like to see that attempt made.

12. Mr. TANTOT (France), referring to the planned reform of senior management at UNDP, said that the idea that UNIFEM should report to the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation had at first seemed logical to his delegation, as that office was central to decision-making and could help integrate women's issues into development activities. On reflection, however, it had decided

(Mr. Tantot, France)

that the approach was premature. Since women's participation in economic life had by no means reached its full measure, France considered that UNIFEM should retain its separate identity and role, in which it had been so successful.

13. Ms. CORVALAN (Observer for Chile) took note of UNIFEM's goal of achieving participation, sustainability and capacity-building, and welcomed the Fund's effort to tear down the walls that had confined women in poverty. The mandate of UNIFEM, to be experimental and catalytic, to test new approaches, and to be an advocate for women, did require a definite capacity to document the process and product of project experience and to disseminate the findings. The creation of national UNIFEM committees was of great interest to Chile.

14. She described briefly the situation of women in Chile, where approximately one in three births was illegitimate, or three out of five in the case of mothers under 20 years old. About 150,000 abortions were performed each year, mortality from abortions accounting for a third of maternal mortality as a whole. Women made up 30 per cent of the workforce, but were discriminated against: a man made more than a woman for the same work. A fifth of all households were headed by women, and 69,000 such households had been living in extreme poverty in 1988.

15. The new Government was giving priority to women's issues and had created a ministerial-level National Women's Service, whose job it was to coordinate, plan and propose policies and programmes to promote women's full equality and participation in all areas of national life and to ensure the elimination of all discrimination. Chile was the first country in Latin America to set up governmental machinery for women at the ministerial level, thereby implementing paragraph 57 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

16. Her delegation shared UNIFEM's concern at the relationship between poverty, environment and women's issues and, accordingly, would like the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development to focus on the impact of environmental degradation on millions of poor women and on the important role that women could play in maintaining ecological balance.

17. Mr. TALADRID (Cuba) said that UNIFEM's projects in Cuba, though small, were considered most useful. His delegation believed that the problem of women's access to work could not be solved through credits and banking arrangements alone. In the third world, and particularly in Latin America, there were acute problems that denied women full participation in the workforce.

18. With respect to UNIFEM's priorities, he agreed that food security was important, but believed that without education and health measures and support for women's right to work, there could be no prospects for significant improvement.

(Mr. Taladrid, Cuba)

19. His delegation concurred with the view of the representative of France that the separate organizational identity of UNIFEM should be maintained.

20. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women), replying to questions raised by members of the Council, said that UNIFEM approved projects on the basis of a number of criteria. In general, projects should catalyse larger systems to do more for women. Since the Fund was a small organization, one of its major tasks was to encourage other parts of the United Nations system, bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations to direct funds towards women. While UNIFEM worked directly with women in developing countries at the grass-roots level, it also sought to establish linkages with policy- and decision-making bodies in those countries. It was necessary to influence general policy-making in order to change the overall environment in which women worked. Women had to understand that policies shaped their lives and policy makers had to see how their decisions affected women. Unless women at the grass-roots level became organized and gained experience and knowledge, the issue of women in development would always be donor-driven. Leadership training, therefore, was essential so that women could negotiate on their own behalf.

21. It was important to ensure that projects addressed women's practical needs and were designed to improve their social and economic status. There must be a local capacity to execute projects. UNIFEM approved projects that related to areas within its terms of reference, such as agriculture, food security, trade and industry and national planning. In view of its limited resources, the Fund focused its projects on those areas to ensure maximum impact and also sought to catalyse other parts of the United Nations system in areas such as health care and education, which did not fall directly within its mandate.

22. The Fund participated with United Nations sister organizations through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) Women in Development Expert Group, which provided access to the women in development (WID) units of funding agencies within the United Nations system. UNIFEM also participated in the inter-agency meetings held annually at Vienna in connection with the Commission on the Status of Women. That made it possible to build alliances and develop strategies for working with the agencies concerned. UNIFEM cooperated with UNIDO, ILO, WFP, FAO, IFAD and the International Trade Centre (ITC) in formulating strategies to bring the issue of women in development to the higher policy-making levels in those agencies.

23. Since it worked with women at the grass-roots level, the Fund could assist those agencies in building linkages at the policy level and ensuring that their programmes actually reached women. There were a number of initiatives in which UNIFEM was working with Governments on a bilateral basis through the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADDC). Canada was funding a strategy for incorporating WID into technical ministries and the SADDC secretariat in order to promote gender sensitivity. The

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

Government of Australia was supporting a number of initiatives in the Pacific region and the Netherlands was providing support for activities in Africa and the Women in Environment and Development Programme. UNIFEM had also gained the support of OECD and inter-agency WID expert groups for spearheading a strategy to enhance donor coordination in support of national machinery for women. The Fund was planning a three-year activity beginning in 1992 to determine what could be done when donors coordinated their efforts with national machinery.

24. UNIFEM had redeployed staff in order to enhance its monitoring and evaluation capability and was working with UNDP to incorporate its evaluation experience into the Programme's database system. The Fund also regularly published a report which provided information on the results of its monitoring and evaluation activities. Having acquired the necessary technology and redeployed staff, the Fund now required further staff resources in order to expand its evaluation capability.

25. The large balance in the UNIFEM account was a matter of concern. Delivery was a high priority and effectiveness was considered to be as important as efficiency of delivery. In that connection, it was absolutely essential to ensure that resources were reaching women in developing countries or were catalysing the funds of larger agencies to enable them to assist a greater number of women. Priority would still be given to reducing the balance. Although it would remain at about the same level in 1991 since UNIFEM was delivering what it was raising, it was hoped that by 1992 the balance would begin to diminish.

26. Lastly, with regard to the question of outreach and mobilization of funds, she felt that UNIFEM was in a unique position to attract additional support to the United Nations system. The Fund had access to a very special constituency, made up of the growing number of women in industrialized countries who were working in corporations and small businesses in the private sector. Those women understood the need for access to training, credit, and labour- and time-saving technologies in developing countries. That was an important constituency for supporting international development efforts. Many contributions were being provided by foundations and women's professional organizations. It was hoped that those women would encourage Governments to increase official development assistance, which seemed to be decreasing in the 1990s.

27. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council agreed that the Drafting Group should prepare a draft decision on the agenda item under consideration.

28. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

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Thirty-eighth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 7 June 1991, at noon

President: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

CONTENTS

Annual report of the Administrator for 1990 and programme-level activities

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The meeting was called to order at 12.15 p.m.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1990 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (DP/1991/10 and Add.1-4)

1. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator) said that the most important message to emerge from the Gulf war was the urgent need to place international cooperation at the centre of world affairs. Five years earlier, when he had assumed his duties as Administrator, the world had been a very different place. Since then, a chain of dramatic and completely unexpected events had taken place, highlighted by the end of the cold war. Perhaps most exciting was the surge of people's movements around the world. The challenge now would be to define a global vision and to rally people's support for the realization of their common future.

2. While the concept of people-centred development was in danger of becoming a cliché, he could not overemphasize its importance or its far-reaching implications. If development was to have permanent effects, men and women must be at the centre of the process. In country after country - from Poland to Haiti and from Bangladesh to Benin - the irresistible pull towards democracy was opening up virtually limitless opportunities.

3. As emphasized in the Human Development Report 1991, the time for a new development ethos had come. The 1990s could be converted into a real human development decade only if the necessary political will was mobilized. UNDP intended to continue its role in human development, as mandated by the Governing Council. For UNDP, the past five years had been a time of reflection and change. Through rigorous and close consultation with its development partners, some guiding principles had emerged.

4. First, development should be seen and judged in terms of its capacity to make people's lives better and more meaningful. While economic growth was necessary for human development, much could be done even at low income levels by reallocating existing resources and ensuring human freedom and human rights. By the same token, higher gross national product levels did not guarantee human development for all in the absence of policies directed to that end.

5. Secondly, the natural environment must be recognized as the source of sustenance for human and other life. It was necessary to build societies in which the preservation of the environment was regarded with as much urgency as the preservation of accustomed lifestyles, since in the long run, human deprivation and environmental neglect would undermine any efforts towards a better world.

6. Thirdly, the success or failure of development ultimately lay with the developing countries themselves. That was not to say that the industrialized countries were absolved of responsibility. In the end, however, development hinged on a country's political will and on the strength of its own human

(Mr. Draper)

resources. National goals and priorities alone must constitute the basis for development cooperation.

7. While institutions were slow to change - and UNDP was no exception - he felt that UNDP had achieved a firm sense of direction and a sound and workable framework for technical cooperation. A number of ideas which were currently being implemented - including the strengthening of national execution and the decentralization of UNDP activities - had been reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 44/211.

8. UNDP was also moving towards a more integrated programme approach, flowing from national priorities, as opposed to a collection of diverse and unrelated projects. Such an approach should enhance programme impact and coordination, and provide UNDP with greater flexibility in responding to the needs of the developing world.

9. The strengthening of many UNDP programmes, particularly those focusing on women, indigenous non-governmental organizations and the private sector, had arisen from a belief in development from within. It was widely acknowledged in donor and developing countries alike that all three were important development resources which could and must be tapped. UNDP was registering accomplishments in each of those areas and was increasing its impact by working at the grass-roots level as well as at the national planning and policy levels. Developing countries had a vast store of experience which they must more actively share with one another. UNDP would continue to do its utmost to promote technical cooperation among developing countries.

10. The integration of women into every aspect of the work of UNDP was a source of growing benefits to women around the world. UNDP was making education available to women in remote regions of Nepal, providing credit and extension services to women farmers in Ghana, and teaching business skills to women in Mexico and Guatemala. At the same time, it was helping the Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Pakistan to bring women more fully into national development planning.

11. Non-governmental organizations were also becoming more frequent partners in UNDP programmes. Since 1988, grants amounting to more than $4 million had been awarded to non-governmental organizations and grass-roots groups in 65 countries through the Partners in Development Programme. Other projects were promoting new cooperation between Governments and non-governmental organizations.

12. UNDP was gaining momentum in the private sector. Over the past five years, UNDP resident representatives had hosted several hundred meetings around the world to bring top government policy makers together with local entrepreneurs. In Latin America, UNDP was helping ACCION International to develop loan programmes for entrepreneurs. Small- and medium-sized businesses in Indonesia were being promoted through a new venture capital fund. Through the Africa Project Development Facility, UNDP had helped 67 enterprises to

(Mr. Draper)

grow, thus creating 5,000 new jobs. In many parts of the world, the demand for United Nations Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) volunteers continued to rise. Lastly, UNDP was breaking new ground in helping Poland, Romania and other European recipient countries to move from centrally planned to market-driven economies. Privatization in countries from Madagascar to Mongolia and from Bolivia to Yemen had also received assistance.

13. In the area of the environment, UNDP had a broad-based approach. It was working with policy makers and planners in the South, and with donors and research institutes in the North. As in other areas, the primary objective of UNDP was to develop the management capacities of men and women so as to ensure environmentally sound development after its work had ended.

14. Together with the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank, UNDP was managing a $1.5 billion global environment facility, which had so far approved projects to fight depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, the loss of bio-diversity and the pollution of international waters.

15. Furthermore, preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development were well under way. In countries all over the world, UNDP was sponsoring awareness-raising seminars and workshops on the environment, and was helping Governments and non-governmental organizations to draw up national and regional strategies in preparation for the Conference.

16. At the same time, UNDP was mindful of the tension which could exist between environmental concerns and economic progress. It was necessary to take a realistic look at both population growth and lifestyles in order to determine the levels at which development could be sustained. Ironically, it was affluence in the North and poverty in the South which caused environmental degradation. Moreover, new global realities, such as limited natural resources and the AIDS tragedy, were bringing to the forefront issues which had previously remained in the background. As the international community dealt with those issues, new ethical standards for global cooperation were being developed.

17. Until recently, for example, UNDP had seldom raised the issues of human freedom and human rights; however, their impact on development could no longer be ignored. In the Human Development Report 1991, 88 countries, developed and developing alike, had been ranked according to a new human freedom index. It had been discovered that there appeared to be a high correlation between human freedom and human development. It should be noted, however, that the human freedom index was only at an initial stage of development and should be regarded as a catalyst for constructive debate.

18. It was not appropriate for UNDP to make human freedom a precondition for assistance, and he was not suggesting such an approach for others. However, UNDP was responding creatively to opportunities at the country level as they arose. For example, UNDP had played a pivotal role in the success of Haiti's

first free elections by channelling $6 million in technical assistance to the independent Electoral Council.

19. UNDP was finding itself in other new and unexpected roles. First, in Somalia, it was providing humanitarian aid in areas of the country controlled by three different political factions. Secondly, in Iraq, it was assisting in relief efforts being coordinated by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. Thirdly, in the Gulf region, 60 United Nations Volunteers were working with United Nations agencies in delivering humanitarian assistance. Lastly, in Thailand, the UNDP Resident Representative had for years spent up to 80 per cent of his time directing the daily delivery of food, water, textbooks and medical supplies to 300,000 displaced persons along the Thai-Cambodian border.

20. The growing number of emergencies world wide, including the painful plight of displaced persons and refugees, demanded a speedy and professional response from the United Nations system as a whole. The coordinating functions of the UNDP resident representatives, in their roles as resident coordinators and representatives of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, placed UNDP in a key position to respond to that challenge in the field.

21. It was in Africa that the greatest challenges for UNDP still lay. While the incomes of many of the world's poor had risen during the 1980s, they had fallen by nearly 20 per cent in Africa. Social services had stagnated or declined. The population was growing by 3 per cent per year, while food production was growing by no more than 1 to 2 per cent. Only one in five children born in Africa currently received adequate nutrition for a healthy and productive life.

22. Hence, it was in Africa that the greatest and most imaginative efforts must be made. Building capacities, first to define strategic national goals and then to manage the development process, was fundamental. Particularly in Africa, where most countries were pursuing difficult structural reforms, human development must be recognized as central to a viable strategy.

23. The integrity of the UNDP programme in Africa and other regions, and the ability of UNDP to respond to new demands, must be commensurate with its level of financial resources. Unless instructed otherwise, UNDP would continue to plan on the basis of the increase in core resources of 8 per cent per year during the fifth cycle which the Governing Council had decided on at its previous session. However, he appealed to the members of the Governing Council to consider carefully the seriousness of the responsibilities with which UNDP was charged and to ask themselves whether their countries might do more. Lastly, he thanked all donors, developed and developing countries alike, for their generous support of UNDP.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.